



The Pony Express: short but proud history

When a remark like, "The Pony Express was faster!" pops up after 120 years, some permanent recognition seems due the long-famed, short-lived courier.

The Pony Express galloped into American history with gusto in 1860 and 18 months later, in 1861, loped off into oblivion, the archives show. Few things have lived on as lively in the memories of succeeding generations of Americans.

The oft-spoken Pony Express promptness remark popped up again in New Jersey not long ago. It occurred in dismay over the three weeks a birthday package mailed from Utah took to reach its East Coast destination.

By comparison, the Pony Express carried mail from Missouri via horsehoofs to California in only eight days in the early 1860s. The ponies raced west and east through Utah regularly. Their speed and their riders' bravery won enduring fame despite their being a slow match with today's jet airmail.

Utahns and Americans aren't the only people fascinated over the frontier-era express system. Even some Europeans find the thoughts of it intriguing. A young Swedish couple rode horseback into Salt Lake City in October 1981. They rode the Pony Express trail throughout, snapping photographs of the prairie's and mountains' beauty, then wrote about it with plans to publish their work later.

